

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

The Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan is primarily comprised of the Downtown Village and the Civic Center Concept areas as depicted in the City of Lemon Grove General Plan as Special Treatment Area 1 (STA 1). Bounded by North Avenue to the north, Olive Street to the west, Lincoln Street and Central Avenue to the south, and School Lane, Grove Street and Kempf Street to the east, land use is predominantly commercial and civic-oriented uses, with limited areas of single and multi-family housing, light industrial and professional buildings. (Figure 1)

This Specific Plan is intended to stimulate several important changes to downtown. These changes will provide for vibrant pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented neighborhoods in central Lemon Grove. By increasing building heights and permitting a variety of residential densities in the Downtown Village, additional redevelopment activity will be created. The future lowering of the Trolley track to eliminate the Lemon Grove Avenue, Broadway and Central Avenue at-grade crossings, and creation of a transit station that integrates both busses and the San Diego Trolley on Main Street near Pacific Avenue, will create better traffic flow and a more pedestrian-friendly downtown atmosphere.

It shall also be noted that this Specific Plan reflects a vision to be implemented over a 15-20 year period, and therefore, may be amended over time to reflect the City's most current vision for the area.

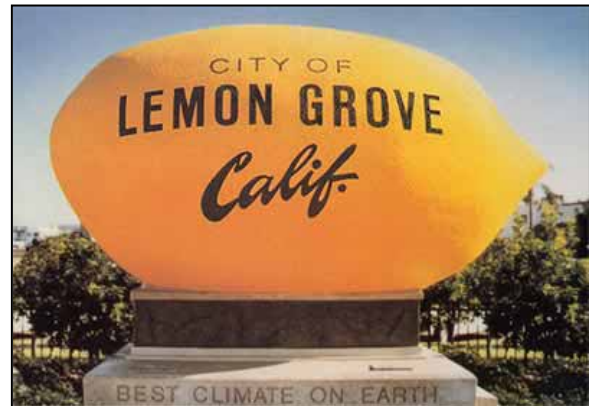
This chapter describes the Specific Plan project area and existing land uses, provides historic background information, addresses the purpose and intent of the Plan and explains the document's organization.

A. Purpose

The Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan provides a policy and regulatory bridge between the City of Lemon Grove General Plan and individual, project-level development. The Downtown Village Specific Plan includes

policies that will serve as guidance to decision-makers, and regulatory development standards and Design Guidelines intended to maintain Lemon Grove's downtown "village" character. It also includes a number of non-regulatory recommendations to other decision makers to address parking, signage and mobility.

The City of Lemon Grove will use the Specific Plan as part of the project review and evaluation process. The Design Guidelines regulations, included in the Plan, inform property owners, developers, and design consultants as to what is required, expected and desired for downtown project design. Once adopted, the Downtown Village Specific Plan's regulations for zoning, development standards and Design Guidelines, will provide the legal development standards for the Specific Plan area. This Specific Plan shall not be considered an inflexible document. Rather, it has been developed to provide as much flexibility as allowed by State law.

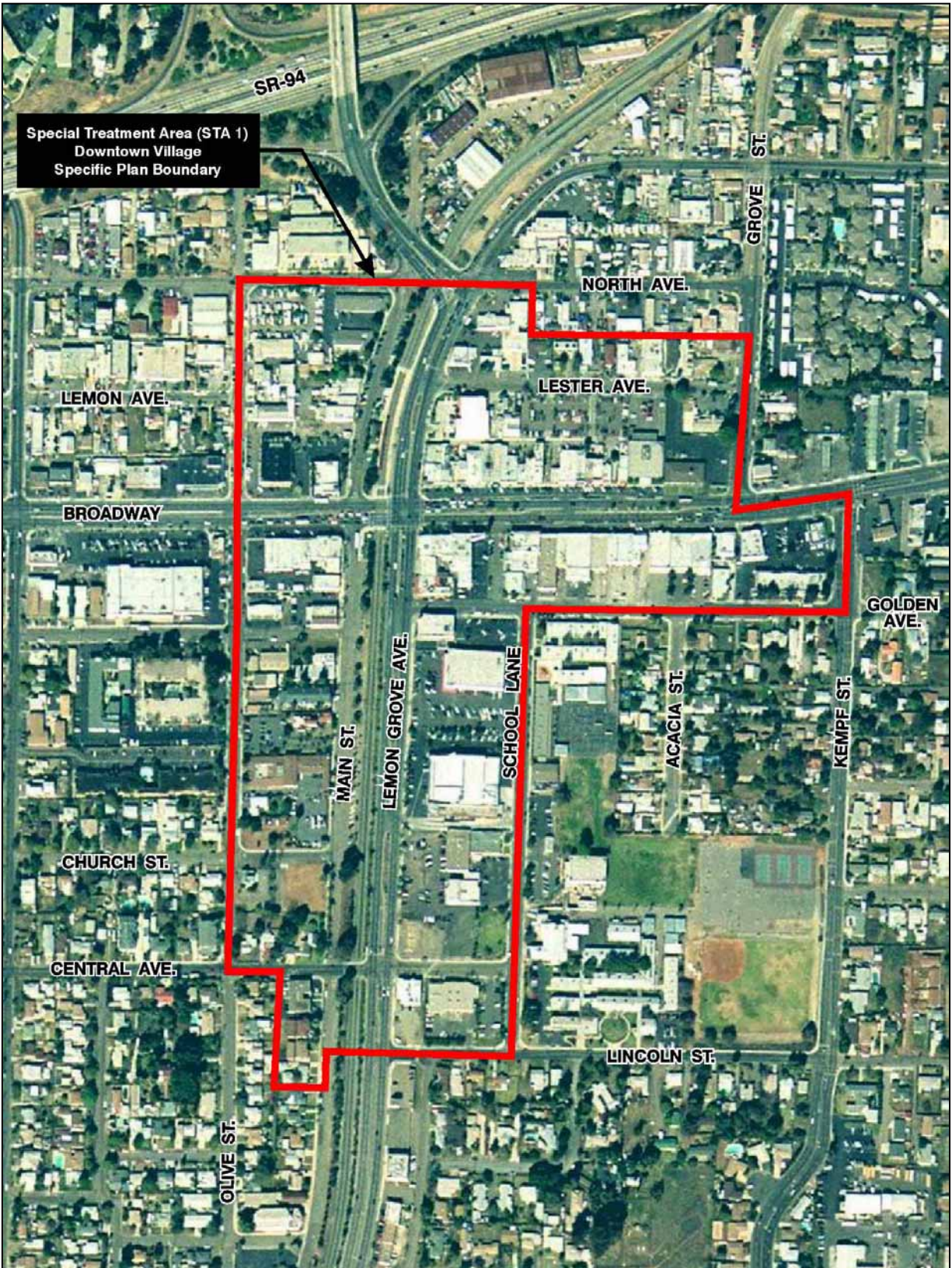


According to the City of Lemon Grove General Plan,

The Downtown Village is planned for a lively mix of retail, office, condominium and apartment development supported by a variety of transportation options. In addition to supporting the village residents, shops and restaurants will provide recreational opportunities for Lemon Grove residents and others from adjacent communities. The residential population will in turn increase the viability of the village shops.

~City of Lemon Grove General Plan





REGIONAL AERIAL MAP
Figure 1



B. Project Area

The City of Lemon Grove is located in the southwest portion of San Diego County. Lemon Grove is centrally located within the greater San Diego/Tijuana urban area, affording residents and businesses easy access to the region's population and employment centers.

Encompassing 3.75 square miles, the City boundaries are defined by the SR-94 freeway to the north, Sweetwater Road to the east, 69th Street and MacArthur Drive on the west, and residential streets to the south. The City of La Mesa lies just north of the City, across SR-94. To the east of the City is the unincorporated community of Spring Valley. Several City of San Diego communities wrap around the southern and western portions of the City. The SR-125 has recently been completed and extends along the City's eastern boundary.

The Downtown Village Specific Plan area covers approximately 58.3 gross acres and stretches from North Avenue south along Olive Street, Lemon Grove Avenue and Grove Street toward Lincoln Street and Central Avenue to the south. The east-west oriented streets including Lester Avenue, Broadway, Golden Avenue, Pacific Avenue, and Central Avenue are all within the boundaries of the project area, including several alleys that afford pedestrian and vehicular access to various land uses.

The existing downtown land uses have evolved since 1869. Current land uses include a mix of retail and office uses, however, some residential and light industrial land uses are found within the downtown village. The existing land uses can be described as a mixture of the following:

Residential- Residential uses are limited to several small apartment complexes.

Public/Institutional- These land uses include public uses and service facilities, such as government offices and facilities, schools, public utilities, post office, libraries, fire and law enforcement stations, social service facilities and churches.

Retail Commercial- These land uses are retail operations providing a broad range of goods and services, catering to both the local and regional customers. Includes shopping centers, department stores, grocery stores, professional services and other compatible retail businesses that are auto-oriented.

Parks/Recreation- Community and small parks, public recreation and a community center are included in this land use category.

San Diego Trolley- The Trolley runs north and south through the Downtown Village between Main Street and Lemon Grove Avenue. The current station is located adjacent to Main Street, north of Broadway.

C. Background



The history of Lemon Grove dates back to 1869 when Robert Allison purchased a portion of Rancho Mission San Diego. A rail line was extended from San Diego to Lemon Grove in 1890, and the production of citrus and berry crops boomed in the warm, temperate climate. The first subdivision was built in 1892 and between 15 and 20 structures were constructed. The center of town was established along the rail lines and included a small depot and the first store, which housed the post office and a school.

The City of Lemon Grove today is characterized by a well established land use pattern. The commercial and industrial areas are primarily located along Broadway, in the northern part of the City. The traditional downtown, (STA I), provides additional shopping opportunities primarily oriented to local residents and



workers. Commercial activity extends southward along Lemon Grove Avenue. The State Route 94 freeway and the San Diego Trolley Orange Line provide regional access.

The Lemon Grove monument – the famous 3,000-pound lemon – sits prominently in the Downtown Village, and recalls images of the community’s industrious spirit and agricultural roots. Moreover, a number of buildings from the old days still stand and provide a connection to the historic origins.

The City of Lemon Grove is committed to optimizing the Downtown Village’s redevelopment efforts through the development of this Specific Plan. Prior to this effort, the City established an Economic Development Task Force, prepared a Sign Ordinance, Redevelopment Plan, Assessment of Economic Development Opportunities, Downtown Storefront Improvement Guidelines and a Transit study. Most recently, in order to facilitate the potential for redevelopment of the Downtown Village, a Subcommittee was appointed to direct the preparation of this Specific Plan.

The challenges of this Downtown Village Specific Plan area are similar to redevelopment efforts for most downtowns and include:

- Providing convenient parking;
- Improving pedestrian, bicycle, auto and transit circulation;
- Enabling local business to compete with regional shopping centers;
- Maximizing the use of civic facilities; and
- Providing smart growth and transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the areas near the Trolley station, including increasing residential density and commercial intensity.

These challenges are either not addressed by existing planning documents, or the existing provisions are written as guidelines and lack implementation mechanisms. In addition the

current Development Code does not adequately address smart growth or transit-oriented development principles.

In 2002, the City’s commitment to preserve and enhance Lemon Grove’s Downtown Village progressed with their decision to develop this Specific Plan.

D. Organization of the Specific Plan

This Specific Plan presents background information; policy direction; and zoning, land use, and Design Guidelines regulations for the Downtown Village area. The Specific Plan is organized into ten chapters, as described below:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan, including intent and purpose of the plan, some historic background information and authority of the document.

Chapter 2: The Vision

This Chapter provides the vision and policy foundation for the Specific Plan document. The Specific Plan Vision describes public outreach activities, planning factors, and Specific Plan goals and objectives related to the development and implementation of the Downtown Village Specific Plan.

Chapter 3: Planning Districts and Regulations

Chapter 3 provides permitted and discretionary uses, development standards, and the regulatory Design Guidelines for the Main Street Promenade, Village Core, Civic Center, and Marketplace Districts respectively.

Chapter 4: Mobility, Public Signage and Parking

This Chapter presents information on vehicular circulation, transit, bicycles, pedestrians, public signage and parking conditions within the



Specific Plan area. It also discusses future changes to public transit and traffic circulation.

Chapter 5: Infrastructure

This non-regulatory Chapter summarizes the public utilities, infrastructure and services that are present and planned for the Specific Plan area. Specific services that are addressed include potable water, sewer, storm water, power, drainage, and telecommunications.

Chapter 6: Implementation and Incentives

This Chapter presents a range of programs and actions that are recommended for the successful revitalization of Downtown Lemon Grove. Major strategy components are outlined, public and private responsibilities and actions are described, and phasing and funding options of projects/programs are identified.

Appendices

The appendices provide background material related to the Specific Plan update process including the Downtown Storefront Improvement Guidelines.

E Relationship of the Specific Plan to the Municipal Code

The Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan is established through the authority granted to the City of Lemon Grove by California Government Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450 through 65457 (specific plans).

As expressed in California law, Specific Plans may be adopted either by ordinance or by resolution. This allows jurisdictions to choose whether their specific plans will be policy driven (adopted by resolution) or regulatory in nature (adopted by ordinance). This Downtown Village Specific Plan is a regulatory document that will be adopted by ordinance.

As set forth in the Government Code, Section 65451, a Specific Plan must contain text and diagrams to address the following:

- The distribution, location and extent of the uses of land within the area covered by the plan.
- The proposed distribution, location, extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the Specific Plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.
- Development Standards and Design Guidelines by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
- A program of specific measures, including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing, necessary for implementation.
- The Specific Plan includes a statement of the relationship of the Specific Plan to the General Plan.

Development Standards and Design Guidelines contained in this Specific Plan will supplement or replace those of the City of Lemon Grove's Municipal Code. Whenever the regulations contained herein conflict with the provisions of the Municipal Code, the regulations of the Specific Plan shall apply. Any development standards or land use regulations not specifically covered herein shall be subject to the regulations, standards, and specifications of the City of Lemon Grove Municipal Code.

Definitions

Words, phrases and terms not specifically defined herein shall have the same definition as provided in the Municipal Code.

When used in this Specific Plan, the term "Director" shall mean the Community Development Director or an appointed representative.



When used in this Specific Plan, the term “Department” shall mean the Community Development Department.

When used in this Specific Plan, the term “Commission” shall mean the City of Lemon Grove Planning Commission.

Interpretations

The Director shall have the responsibility to interpret the provisions of this Specific Plan. Any decision of the Director interpreting this Specific Plan may be appealed to the Planning Commission. All such interpretations shall be in written form and shall be permanently maintained. Any person may appeal a decision of the Planning Commission to the City Council.

Amendments

This Specific Plan, including the Land Use Map, may be amended as allowed by Government Code. Each amendment shall include all sections or portions of the Specific Plan that are affected by the change. An amendment may be initiated by the City Council, Planning Commission, or private property owner. Any amendment requested by a property owner may be subject to the fee schedule adopted by the City Council.

Severability

If any regulation, condition, program or portion thereof of this Specific Plan is held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of the competent jurisdiction, the portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and the invalidity of such provision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions.

Discretionary Use Permits

Minor Use Permit

These provisions prescribe the procedures for the accommodation of uses with site or design requirements, operating characteristics, or potential adverse effects on surrounding uses, which have been determined to be of such nature

and intensity as to not require the level of review required for those activities governed by the Conditional Use Permit process.

The uses, subject to these regulations, may or may not be compatible with other land uses in the vicinity depending upon the circumstances of the individual case. The Minor Use Permit allows such other uses to be reviewed and provides for conditional approvals or disapprovals to assure that any area will assume or retain the characteristics intended by the General Plan and this Specific Plan. Minor Use Permit procedures are outlined in section 17.28.052 of the Municipal Code.

Conditional Use Permit

These provisions prescribe the procedures for the accommodation of uses with special site or design requirements, operating characteristics, or potential adverse effects on surrounding uses, and shall apply to all projects for which a Conditional Use Permit is required.

Each land use has its principally permitted uses, but other uses may or may not be compatible with their surroundings depending upon the circumstances of the individual case. The Conditional Use Permit allows such other uses to be reviewed and adequately controlled or prohibited to assure that any area will assume or retain the characteristics intended by this Specific Plan. Conditional Use Permit procedures are outlined in Section 17.28.050 of the Municipal Code.

Planned Development Permit

The Planned Development Permit (PDP) procedure is intended to provide a method whereby land may be designed and developed as a unit by taking advantage of modern site planning techniques; and to produce an environment of stable, desirable character which will be in harmony with the existing or potential development of the surrounding neighborhood; and to ensure development which meets standards of environmental quality, public health and safety, and efficient use of the City’s resources.



Municipal Code section 17.28.030 includes information regarding Planned Development Permits procedures and administration.

Nonconforming Uses and Structures

Municipal Code section 17.24.090 includes information regarding procedures and administration for Nonconforming Uses and Structures.

Review of Projects

Design review for each project proposed in the Specific Plan area is required. Design Guidelines presented in the Specific Plan are to be used by property owners, developers, architects, landscape architects, designers and others involved in the planning and design of a project in the Specific Plan area.

The Design Guidelines communicate the City's desired qualities and characteristics of development and are intended to promote quality design that is compatible with Lemon Grove's vision for its downtown.

The Design Guidelines will be applied during the City's Development Review Approval process. This procedure is meant to encourage the highest level of design quality while providing the flexibility necessary to encourage creativity in response to existing site conditions.

Typical project submittals shall include:

- site plan
- landscaping concept plan
- floor plans for each floor level
- architectural elevations
- materials and colors
- cross-sections with dimensions, street façade studies, or architectural elevations to show the site in relation to adjacent properties.

- other information as necessary to provide adequate analysis

The review of submitted materials will be completed by Staff. Staff will make findings whether the submittal conforms with the letter and intent of this Specific Plan. All such findings shall be in written form and shall be permanently maintained. These findings may be appealed to the Planning Commission and/or the City Council. All projects within the Specific Plan area are subject to review and approval in compliance with the provisions herein and the Municipal Code.

Design Guidelines in the Specific Plan

Design Guidelines for site planning, storefront design, buildings, landscape/ hardscape, signs and public spaces within the Downtown Village are provided. As stated in the Downtown Storefront Improvement Guidelines, "the overall Design effort shall be to create a logical sense of order, distinct identity, and visual continuity throughout the Downtown Village District."

The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to protect the special identity of the downtown.

The Guidelines are intended to:

- Improve the quality of physical changes
- Protect/enhance the architectural character
- Act as a basis for objective decision making
- Increase public awareness of architectural quality, and
- Prevent incompatible new construction

The Design Guidelines acknowledge the built environment and existing development patterns within Lemon Grove's downtown. They are meant to promote the positive design characteristics that currently exist in the downtown and to enhance and improve the existing architectural and open space features.



These Guidelines are less quantitative than the mandatory development standards and may be interpreted with some flexibility in the application to specific projects. The Design Guidelines complement the mandatory development standards contained in this Specific Plan by providing good examples of appropriate design solutions and by providing design interpretations of the various mandatory regulations.

Interpretation

Guidelines that employ the word “shall” are intended to be applied as stated. An alternative measure may be considered, however, if it meets or exceeds the intent of the Guidelines.

Applicability

The provisions of this section are applicable to all development within the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan area.

Organization

The Design Guidelines are organized into the following sections:

- a. Site Planning and Street Design: Includes guidelines for building, and parking location and design in relationship to the street (its street edge condition), service areas, and three-dimensional criteria.
- b. Storefront/Facade Design: Provides guidelines that promote quality design for the ground floor of new buildings and rehabilitation of existing buildings.
- c. Landscaping/Hardscape: Provides a basic framework that is to be used in conjunction with new development.
- d. Signage and Identity: Sets forth general and specific guidelines to enhance the image of commercial areas and improve the effectiveness of signage for businesses.
- e. Public Spaces: Includes guidelines associated with plazas, courtyards, paseos, landscaping, and public art within the Specific Plan areas.
- f. Parking: Sets forth guidelines for design and location of on-street and off-street parking spaces and lots.

